



Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW, CHAIR
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON

APPROVED MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **November 3, 2008**, at Magnolia Place, 1910 Magnolia Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Stacey Savelle
Patricia Curry	Adelina Sorkin
Ann Franzen	Martha Trevino Powell
Rev. Cecil Murray	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton
Tina Pedersen	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Helen Kleinberg	Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Susan Friedman	Sandra Rudnick

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sorkin, Chair.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made. Chair Sorkin thanked Alex Morales, Executive Director of Magnolia Place, for hosting this Commission meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the November 3, 2008 Special Meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 20, 2008 – The approval of Minutes was held over to the next meeting.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

- CEO Joint Commission Meeting
Chair Sorkin reported on the Joint Commission meeting she and the Executive Director attended on October 22, 2008. The meeting was convened by Sheila Shima, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO), at the request of Jerry Lubin, Chair of the Mental Health Commission and Dr. Lester Breslow, former Chair and current member of the Public Health Commission, in order to encourage collaboration among Commissions that have common interests and responsibilities. The participating Commissions included:
 - Commission for Children and Families
 - Commission for Public Social Services
 - Commission on Alcoholism
 - Hospitals and Health Care Delivery Commission
 - The Children's Council of Los Angeles
 - Commission on Aging
 - Mental Health Commission
 - Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission
 - Public Health Commission

The purpose of the meeting was to agree on mutual agendas for certain topics of concern to these Commissions. Each Commission gave a brief description of their respective Commission's mission, purpose, and what major activities or issues they are currently engaged in. The following topics were discussed:

- Suicide prevention and early intervention
- Homeless Prevention Initiative
- Pediatric Care
- Aging
- Co-occurring Disorders
- Prevention Initiatives

Discussion

The CEO identified Prevention Initiatives as an area of focus. Additionally, the Chair of the Hospital and Health Care Delivery Commission and the past Chair of the Public Health Commission, along with others, discussed supporting an Immunization Project for children. No consensus was reached on the topics. The group will reconvene again in December 2008.

Chair Sorkin also reported on the Rising Stars event that she and Trish Ploehn attended on Sunday, November 2, 2008. The Chair reported that the event proved to be inspiring with five foster youth performing. This again is an indication of the need to provide opportunities for our youth in the arts as has been done at Camp Gonzalez and Art S.M.A.R.T. (a program started 10 years ago as a joint effort between the Commission for Children and Families and Mental Health Commission along with the Probation Department).

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DCFS Director Trish Ploehn reported on the following:

- The L.A. Care Program is being developed by the CEO and DCFS. The CEO and DCFS have reviewed a nationally known data system in Allegheny, Pennsylvania called Data Mart, an automated system which gathers information on families prior to entering the welfare system. This information is made accessible to authorized service providers.

L.A. Care is currently in the planning stages with discussions between community partners and County departments.

- The Family Reunification Re-Entry Study is being conducted on a random sample of 60 cases. Interns as well as staff are currently being trained to conduct this study. The first part will begin in November, 2008. Assessment interviews will be conducted between children and Social Workers in an effort to gather case information, specifically what was done correctly and what could have been done differently. The second part will take place in 2009.

Chair Sorkin requested information regarding two items that will be heard by the Board.

1. Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDF) increased funding for evaluation.
2. Wraparound services and whether SPA 6 is receiving an equitable share of wraparound slots.

Trish Ploehn indicated that each SPA will be receiving an additional \$25,000 for evaluation. The evaluation of the PIDF will be coordinated through the Casey Family Programs.

Follow-up

The Commission inquired whether re-entry includes re-entry into Probation from DCFS. Trish Ploehn was not certain and agreed to look into the re-entry from DCFS to Probation.

Trish Ploehn agreed to get back to the Commission with the number of wraparounds in SPA 6 based on the need and number of providers as compared to other SPAs.

VII. PRESENTATION – TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH (TAY) PANEL

Commissioner Trish Curry gave a historical overview of the TAY Program, which began 15 years ago to improve the emancipation system. About 5-6 years ago, Sharon Watson was contracted to collaborate funds within departments, as ordered by the Board of Supervisors, in an effort to pull resources in the departments together. The CEO is now attempting to tighten integration with departments and leverage resources. The CEO, DCFS, Probation and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) provided the Commission with an update on the current TAY efforts:

- CEO – Jenny Serrano is the CEO TAY Coordinator. Ms. Serrano provided the Commission with an overview of her role and responsibility as the Countywide TAY Coordinator. She indicated that she works exclusively coordinating efforts between several departments that

provide TAY services. The priority groups are current and former foster youth and Probation youth 16-24 years old (sometimes 12 year olds) that are moving towards emancipation. The primary initiatives include housing, juvenile justice, education, employment, mental health, and youth development services partnership.

- DCFS – Rhelda Shabazz gave an update on Independent Living Program (ILP), TAY and DCFS' collaboration with Probation and the Casey Foundation. They are working on Breakthrough Series Collaboration with Casey on education, permanency and employment focusing on children leaving County programs. They are partnering with the community and the City on a demonstration project and have hired approximately 200 foster youth. They also have employment projects in South Central L.A. and the San Gabriel Valley and are developing a vocational skills program as a follow-up.
- Probation - Michael Verner discussed the updating of the ILP Website and how Probation is working on standardizing tasks, duties and services leading to improved outcomes. They have an Exit Outcome Form and are working on a Food Stamp Waiver for 18 year olds that are aging out of the system and are working on connecting them to services.
- DMH – Teri Boykins gave an overview of the DMH TAY Division, which began servicing 16-25 year olds in 2006. The TAY MHSA funded programs and services available through DMH and its Community-Based contracted agencies include the following:
 1. Full-Service Partnerships (FSP)
 2. Drop-In Centers
 3. Enhanced Emergency Shelters for TAY
 4. Project-Based Operating Subsidies for Permanent Housing
 5. Probation Camp Services
 6. Housing Specialist Services
 7. TAY System Navigators
 8. Co-located Staff at Transition Resource Centers (TRC)
 9. Field Capable Clinical Services (FCCS)
 10. Training Workforce
 11. Day Reporting Center (DRC)

Terri stated that a challenge for the TAY program has been recruiting and retaining staff. A solution has been workforce training. A focus is on training staff to handle this population differently than in the past. Also, a clinician and a substance abuse counselor from DMH will be working with the Adult Probation Bureau.

Karen Streich, of DMH, discussed the efforts to redesign Probation Camps to make positive behavioral changes in youth and help reintegrate youth into the community after release from camps. Some key efforts including decentralization of the administration of medication, a camp assessment unit to determine which camp best meets the needs of youth, enhanced mental health services, and the mix of staff such as substance abuse counselors with parent advocates. The TAY Division is developing a comprehensive TAY-focused training plan. The primary purpose is for TAY service providers to have access to training that will assist them in the identification, assessment, and intervention skills necessary to address the specialized needs of this population.

Follow-up

Commissioner Steven Olivas requested a report back on exit outcomes including reports on ILP progress and Probation. The TAY Panel agreed to provide the exit outcomes in the next quarter including ILP progress and Probation progress.

Public Comment – Lara Holtzman from the Alliance for Children’s Rights, expressed concerns regarding youth leaving camps and not being placed on Suitable Placement Orders, which creates barriers to them becoming eligible for ILP/Transitional Housing/Medi-Cal eligible. She indicated there is a lack of interface between those releasing youth from the camps and the placement unit.

VIII. UPDATE – GEORGETOWN PROJECT

- Probation – Chief Robert Taylor gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Georgetown Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare Integration-Breakthrough Series Collaborative. This Collaboration began with a 5 day study Certificate Program at Georgetown University in July, 2008 for a team of multi-system jurisdictional leaders. The purpose/focus is to reduce the number of crossover children from the dependency system to the juvenile justice system.

Los Angeles County participated along with:

- Denver, Colorado
- Miami-Dade County, Florida
- Sioux City, Iowa
- Baltimore City, Maryland
- Georgetown, South Carolina
- King County, Washington

Los Angeles County’s Certificate Program Team included:

Senior Leaders

Robert Taylor, Chief Probation Officer

Trish Ploehn, Director, DCFS

Judge Michael Nash, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court

Certificate Team Members

Marvin Southard, Director, DMH

Jitahadi Imara, Probation Deputy Director

Jane Newman, Head Deputy Public Defender

Rebecca Lewis, Deputy District Attorney

After the Certificate Program, jurisdictions participate in a year-long Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) project on Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Integration.

The Los Angeles County Core Team includes:

Day-to-Day Managers

Jitahadi Imara, Probation

Eric Mart, DCFS

Coordinator/Data & Measurement

Dawn Weinberg, Probation

Juvenile Justice Agency, Child Welfare & DMH Staff

Sharon Harada, Probation

Andrya Moguel, DCFS

Sandra Thomas, DMH

Cara Esposito, USC

Biological/Birth Parents

Youth Participants

The BSC Timeline and Next Steps:

- Monthly Collaborative Calls with Georgetown and other jurisdictions.
- Senior Leaders Calls with Georgetown
- Weekly Core team meetings/conference calls; feedback on progress and guidance from Senior Leaders
- Extended Community Team: SPA 6 members from school, courts, law enforcement, CBOs, FBOs, MH, parents and youth
- Operational definition of outcome measures and collection of baseline data and monthly reports: October 14, 2008
- Learning Session #1: November 17-18, 2008
- Action Period 1: Implement small tests of change within SPA 6 target site:
 - SPA 6 target site – Kenyon Court
 - Target Population: 241.1 youth in Kenyon Court
 - Proposed small test of change: 5 Kenyon Court youth and implement improved assessment leading to defined case plan and treatment linkage. Outcomes will be used to inform improvements within Pasadena Pilot.
- Learning Session #2: March 31 – April 1, 2009
- Learning Session #3: September 15 – 16, 2009

Commissioners Sorkin and Curry inquired whether DMH and County Counsel agreed to share information. Chief Taylor stated that DMH is completely on board with this project. County Counsel, however, supports the project 100% in theory and supports the need for this project but as far as data sharing, County Counsel is being very careful that they stay within the law. The Commission expressed concern that the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System kids could be one and the same. Chief Taylor concurred that these youth many times are the same. The Commission also inquired how they could be of assistance to the Georgetown Project. The Commission asked Chief Taylor what support or assistance they might provide for the Georgetown Project. Chief Taylor requested the Commission hold the Georgetown Project Team accountable, and request them to report back to the Commission. Commissioner Sorkin inquired about the child welfare 241.1 “dumping” of children to Probation. Commissioner Curry requested statistics on these instances. Chief Taylor will forward this information to the Commission. The Commission also inquired about steps that could be used to prevent DCFS from crossing-over juveniles to Probation who are placed in group homes as a result of incidences such as “a little pushing and shoving, etc.” that might otherwise not be an issue if they were not involved with DCFS; and the need for additional training for providers. Additionally, the Commission expressed an interest in being part of the Extended Community Team for the Georgetown Project.

Follow-up

Probation will provide the Commission with regular updates/reports regarding the progress from the Georgetown Project Team.

Chief Taylor agreed to include the Commission in the Extended Community Team. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton volunteered to attend the meetings and represent the Commission. Chief Taylor also agreed to provide the Commission with a copy of the 241 report by Probation.

The Commission agreed to forward its recommendation to DCFS and Probation regarding the need for additional education and training for providers on how to handle minor incidents without necessarily involving law enforcement to prevent youth from crossing-over to Probation or being placed in Juvenile Hall.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

XI. ADJOURN

Commission Chair Sorkin adjourned the meeting.